

Death the hero

Wycombe Wands 1 Reading 2

BRILLIANT goalkeeping by Reading's Steve Death denied the battling Isthmian Leaguers a replay yesterday.

After being rocked by Robin Friday goals in the fifth and 32nd minutes, Wycombe bounced back in the second half to really put Reading on the rack.

But Wycombe had to be content with a 68th minute goal from schoolteacher Ian Pearson.

And Death was the man who denied them with saves from Howard Kennedy and Pearson. In injury time he dived to tip Pearson's effort on to a post.

Wycombe boss Ted Powell said: "Both goals came from defensive mistakes and apart from these our keeper had nothing to do."

Wycombe beaten by that slope

Wycombe 1 Reading 2 By JON CULVERHOUSE

MANAGER Ted Powell did not see the irony in his verdict on Wycombe's defeat on the Loakes Park slope that was expected to cause another Cup upset.

"The pitch brought us down to their level," he complained, after both sides had been reduced to playing kid-glove football on its frostbound surface.

Striker Robin Friday left his mark on this second-round tie with both Reading goals, and a booking for a late tackle on Mick Holifield. But he denied suggestions that his Isthmian League experience of the notorious slope had helped.

Friday's success did nothing to alter his feelings about a transfer. 'Scoring twice makes no difference,' he said. 'I still want a higher grade of football.'

The Reading striker pounced twice in the first 32 minutes but a Wycombe revival always looked possible.

And when Ian Pearson scored the game's best goal in the 68th minute Reading were forced to a desperate rearguard action.

Answering Wycombe's claims that he handled when scoring Reading's first, Friday said: 'Yes, I did, but it was accidental.'

Wycombe: Pearson (68mins).
Reading: Friday (6, 32).